



## **Dulles Direct Newsletter – January 2015**

Welcome to the January edition of the Dulles Direct newsletter. We're off to a very busy start to 2015. Some of the items I'll cover in this month's newsletter include the launch of new local bus service in Dulles South, the FY2016 budget, and news on projects like the Dulles South Multipurpose Center expansion.

At the Board's first meeting of the year, Chairman Scott York announced he would not be seeking reelection. Chairman York was first elected to the Board in 1995 (as Sterling District Supervisor), and as Chairman in 1999. Including his time as a Planning Commissioner, he has been serving the County for over 23 years. I believe that Scott is the most important and influential political figure that Loudoun County has ever known, and I sincerely thank him for his years of service. He has been unfailingly supportive of my top priorities over the last three years and has been instrumental in projects like the 606 widening project, not to mention bringing Metro to Loudoun which he worked on for two decades.

Thus far, three of my colleagues have announced their intentions to step down from the Board next year—Chairman York, Supervisor Clarke and Supervisor Reid, so there are guaranteed to be changes. I will make an announcement regarding my own intentions in the coming days.

For 2015, I will continue to serve as Chairman of the Board's Economic Development Committee, and as a member of the Finance, Government Services and Operations Committee. I will also remain a member of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors, though my term as President ended at the end of December. I'm currently serving as Vice Chairman of the Route 28 Transportation Improvement District Commission as well, and as a member of the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority's policy committee.

In other personal news, I had the opportunity to address the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Policy Maker breakfast about economic development. The Washington region is currently experiencing tough times. In fact, I quoted GMU economist Dr. Stephen Fuller, who pronounced: "In relative worse, we are worse than Detroit." It's true. The region is seeing severely depressed job and economic growth, thanks largely to sequestration. The good news is

that Loudoun's economy has remained strong, I believe thanks in part to the work that the Board has done to increase and diversify our tax base. We are outperforming our neighbors, but we must remain extremely cautious as we are certainly not immune from the downturn.

In order to continue to diversify, I gave a preview of our upcoming international business development strategy. The Board tasked our Department of Economic Development to create a comprehensive strategy that will allow us to expand our reach around the globe in a smart, strategic way. While we won't be able to open up seven international offices like Fairfax County, it is time for us to start leveraging the appetite for capital investment in the Middle East, our ideal location near the diplomatic capital of the world and home to its international airport, and our extremely diverse and talented population. On February 2, my committee will formally begin this discussion, and I'm looking forward to it.

I'd like to congratulate my Dulles District Planning Commissioner, Jeff Salmon, on his election as Chairman of the Planning Commission. Jeff was selected by his peers to lead the Commission in 2015. Jeff is diligent and hardworking and while we don't always agree on land use applications, I can always rely on him for a thorough and unvarnished briefing before Board action.

Finally, a change in my office. I'm pleased that Tom Parker, who previously served as my Legislative Aide, has returned, this time in a part time staff aide capacity. Tom will be working on constituent issues, assisting me with the budget, and on other special projects. Monica Filyaw will continue to serve as the Legislative Aide. I've got a great team helping me in my Board office. As always, don't hesitate to contact us if you need our assistance.

Enjoy the Super Bowl and GO PATRIOTS!

Now, onto the issues:

## **LEGISLATIVE UPDATES**

### **School Playgrounds**

At our January 7 Business meeting, the Board of Supervisors unanimously supported a policy change to allow public funding to be used to install playgrounds at new schools. This could directly impact Cardinal Ridge Elementary and Moorefield Station Elementary schools, which currently do not have them. The Board's action gives the School Board the option of using previously approved capital construction funds to install playgrounds, and to include playgrounds as part of the program at new schools. I strongly supported this change. While I understand that others in our community worked hard to raise funds for their playgrounds, the reality is that many of the parents at the new schools have already contributed to playgrounds at their previous schools. It seems unfair to ask them to go through the entire fundraising process twice. Dulles District School Board Representative Jeff Morse has led the charge for this policy change on the School Board and I appreciate his work.

### **Brambleton Applications Approved With Loudoun County Parkway Commitment**

As you know, I give great scrutiny to applications to build more homes. I've had discussions with Brambleton's developers throughout my entire term on their plans to build over 800 new homes beyond their existing approvals. A chunk of those homes (506) were approved last week by the Board after several major commitments from the developer. As you might recall, I took the position that I would not support any additional units unless the County received a firm commitment to build the missing link of Loudoun County Parkway. We've budgeted for the project, but it's an expensive and time consuming project and it would take the County years to get it done. As part of the agreement with Brambleton, Loudoun County Parkway must be ready to open before Brambleton can build any newly approved homes. At this point, the outstanding part of Loudoun County Parkway relates to the 606 widening project. I can safely project a mid-2017 opening for Loudoun County Parkway, with hopes that it can be done sooner, depending on the site work that has to be done at the 606/Loudoun County Parkway intersection, which happens to be a major crosspoint for utility lines. The other commitments from Brambleton include 2 new school sites (middle school and high school), which are ideally situated and supported by the School Board, acceleration of an elementary school site, a new County library, and a very nice performing arts center that will be housed in a renovated dairy barn still standing near Belmont Ridge Road. This portion of the Brambleton project is located entirely in residentially zoned land, which means houses could and will be built on the property anyway, albeit at less density. Every land use application is a trade off, and I'm quite cognizant that adding more homes only intensifies the strain on infrastructure, school operating budgets and services. At the same time, the Board must weigh the benefit to existing citizens. The Loudoun County Parkway link is absolutely critical for us, and the lack of that road is costing residents hours stuck in the Belmont Ridge and Evergreen Mills intersections. This particular area has the most overcrowded schools in Loudoun, and at this point other solutions to that problem would take longer than this one. So, I ultimately voted in support of this application, which passed unanimously.

Coming forward is another Brambleton application that has different characteristics-commercial land, closer to the airport-and I have real reservations about that concept. Stay tuned.

### **Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street**

The Board approved my Board Member Initiative at the January 21 Business Meeting to direct staff to identify the cost and funding sources available for permanent safety improvements to Loudoun County Parkway and Center Street. I appreciate the South Riding Proprietary Board of Directors' support of this item. As you are aware, back in August of 2013, temporary flexposts were installed and a traffic study was prepared to compare with a previously completed study. Since the installation, the intersection has performed better—with fewer accidents. Although the flexposts have had no significant adverse impacts on traffic operations or safety, they are only a temporary measure and not aesthetically pleasing.

### **Limited Breweries Zoning Ordinance**

Loudoun became the first County in the Commonwealth to incorporate a limited brewery ordinance into local legislation this past week. This ordinance will allow limited breweries in

our Agricultural Districts. Our Department of Economic Development already has commitments from seven breweries to locate facilities in the County. The ordinance passed with two amendments. One was an amendment pertaining to easement access agreements. The other was an amendment I offered to require breweries to submit a sketch plan to the County prior to approval. Sketch plans allow Fire-Rescue and law enforcement the ability to know the layout of the structure, including entrance points, in the event of an emergency. My amendment was adopted 6-3 and the overall ordinance passed 8-1.

### **Edgewater Daycare Application**

At the February 11 Public Hearing, Goosecreek Daycare LLC will be before the Board with an application proposing to build a 10,000 square foot daycare center to serve 175 children on Edgewater Drive in the South Village community. Given the level of interest in the community on this application, I think it would be productive to hold a meeting with members of the community to discuss the application prior to Board action, which could come in March. We're working on that now.

The parcel itself is zoned PD-CC-NC (Planned Development-Commercial Center-Neighborhood Center). It has been zoned that way since 1991 as part of the master plan for the entire South Riding development. While South Riding itself is zoned PDH-4, individual parcels within South Riding have different zoning, including this one. I understand there may some confusion on this point, but the special exception the applicant is seeking is not to convert the parcel from residential to commercial—it already has commercial zoning. In order for the parcel to become residential or open space, either the current owner—Toll Brothers—or a new owner would need to seek a rezoning with the Board of Supervisors. As long as the parcel is zoned commercial, the Board must consider it as such.

There is also some concern that the proposed use is a daycare. The Loudoun County Revised General Plan has long encouraged daycare centers surrounded by residential parcels, with the logic being that residential is going to generate a demand for daycare, and it is better to make it closer to housing to reduce the need to travel and generate additional traffic. By placing daycare citizens within communities, some residents can walk to the center, or have very short drives in the winter. There is continued significant demand for daycare in our area. Many private daycares have waiting lists, as does the County's. As the second fastest growing County in America, services like daycares fill up quickly in Loudoun.

Regardless of demand, daycare centers are an approved use within the PD-CC-NC zoning district, so once again, the Board could not decide that we just didn't want a daycare on this parcel—the law would not permit that.

As far as traffic impacts, the Board and staff cannot compare this particular use's impacts with nothing, since this is an active parcel that can be developed at any time. Rather, it can only be compared to other possible uses on the parcel, such as retail/convenience. The traffic study indicates that the daycare use would generate 1,241 fewer weekday trips than the most likely alternative use for this parcel, which would be convenience store/neighborhood retail.

I understand there are also concerns regarding street parking on Edgewater Drive. Since Edgewater is a VDOT-maintained road, the County cannot limit street parking nor use that as reason to deny the location. Chairman Salmon advised the Commission and the public that he has spoken directly with VDOT, and VDOT will be conducting a sight distance study along this section of Edgewater Street. County Staff have also requested that VDOT evaluate this issue. VDOT would install any needed signage, such as no parking signage (no parking for anyone from the public or the child care center) to address any sight distance issues.

The reason why this application requires a special exception is because the original plans called for two 5,000 square foot uses instead of one 10,000 square foot use. Within the County's rules for this type of development, the application is also seeking a reduction in parking spaces (to 36 spaces), and some changes to the easements and buffers, which includes counting open space on a South Village HOA parcel as part of the buffer, and planting trees on HOA property to help meet the tree canopy requirements.

To me, the parking issue deserves the most attention. The applicant has submitted two very detailed parking studies which suggest that the maximum number of spaces needed would be 27-32. I have not yet reviewed the studies other than a cursory look, but I will be taking a closer look before the public hearing. I can tell you that our professional staff found the applicant's argument convincing and ultimately accepted the applicant's proposed number of parking spaces. I think it is fair to say that our staff is generally rather skeptical and has a high burden on these types of issues, so it is noteworthy that they're in agreement on the number of spaces. Nevertheless, I think this is a very legitimate concern that needs further review.

Also, the issue of multiple buildings totaling 10,000 square feet versus one 10,000 square foot building in the long run may result in less impact to the community. For instance, a small strip-style shopping complex could locate on this parcel. This could include uses such as convenience stores, banks, dry cleaners, etc—which means a steady stream of vehicle traffic all day, most days. Daycares have less impact.

The grounds for the Board to deny the application would be very weak. Furthermore, if we did deny the application, the applicant could challenge our decision in court, and the County would have to defend the case and have solid evidentiary reasoning for our denial. I think that would be a real challenge, especially in Virginia. Judges in Virginia can and do overturn land use decisions, especially in situations like this.

I know that it will probably be impossible to get to a place where everybody is pleased with this application, but perhaps there are ways to address some of the concerns. I'd like to flesh them out further, both by continuing a dialogue with the HOA and residents and by working with staff and the applicant.

### **Loudoun Retains K2M**

Also at the January 7 meeting, the Board approved a Governor's Development Opportunity Fund (GOF) Grant match in the amount of \$450,000 in the form of fee waivers and cash for the planned construction of a K2M Group Holdings, Inc. new headquarters facility in the Oaklawn



development located in the Town of Leesburg. Their current facility in Leesburg is no longer adequate to support planned new growth. K2M is a global medical device company focused on designing, developing and commercializing innovative complex spine and minimally invasive spine technologies.

Back in 2013, the Department of Economic Development was informed by K2M that they were exploring options for relocation and that the State of Maryland was aggressively pursuing the corporation into the state. DED worked with the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Town of Leesburg on a proposal to retain and grow the company in Loudoun.

We are often asked about the use of incentives to retain companies and employers here in Loudoun County. Our incentives are accompanied by performance agreements that include performance targets, disbursement instruction, a description and use of GOF and County and Town funds, reporting requirements and clawback provisions, which require the incentive to be repaid if the County doesn't recoup its investment. When a neighboring jurisdiction or another locality is actively working to lure away jobs, you can be sure that we will work hard to keep those jobs, those investments and those tax dollars here in Loudoun. With this grant, K2M will undergo a major \$28.4 million investment and expansion that includes construction of its new headquarters facility. This expansion will create 97 new jobs over 36 months. K2M will also retain its 268 existing Loudoun jobs. According to our staff's Return on Investment (ROI) analysis, we will see an estimated ROI in approximately 30 months.

## **FY16 BUDGET**

The County Administrator will be presenting his proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors on February 4th. Last night, the School Board passed a \$982 million budget which exceeded Superintendent Eric Williams proposed budget by just under \$1.3 million. On the County side, we've had ongoing issues with staffing of critical functions like child protection services and other social services. We also have important capital projects that need funding, which I'll discuss in greater detail after the presentation.

Much of the focus every budget season is on the school budget. With it being an election year, this process will probably be even more politicized than it was last year. T-shirts and signs have already been deployed, and I'm sure there are more to come.

At the moment, the gap between the School Board's proposal and the County's budget is approximately \$29 million at the projected equalized tax rate. This number could change depending on a couple of external factors: County revenue collections and state funding.

At the onset of the discussions, I'll offer a couple of thoughts. The first is that the slogan "fully fund the budget" doesn't have a great deal of meaning because its completely arbitrary. "Full funding" of the budget also doesn't guarantee that a particular enhancement or issue is addressed. For instance, there have been some issues with double busing and transportation in Dulles South recently. The Superintendent's budget actually proposes to further reduce funding, at least for personnel, in this area. Therefore, on the surface, "full funding" of the budget won't do anything to help. But its always much more complicated than the slogan indicates anyway. I

intend to delve into this further, but it appears that the Superintendent believes that a restructuring of that particular department (transportation) is needed. There's a new director in place, and evidently some changes are going to be made to operate the department better. That's a good thing. I get frustrated with the notion that throwing money at problems is the only way to solve them—particularly in a billion dollar system under new management for the first time in 22 years.

My priorities in the school area will be: paying for increased enrollment, maintaining school buses (an item that always seems to be put off), and improving technology. Since I don't have any line item budget authority whatsoever, my individual priorities probably don't mean a lot, but to me these are basic things that need to be done. That isn't to say there aren't other important things; but in my view, our budget needs to cover these items at the least.

There are a lot of discussions about health care costs and compensation. I'd like to pay all County employees, including school employees, more money, and hopefully we can include raises in the budget. I appreciate the challenges that rising health care costs are posing for employees. But I'd hazard a guess that there isn't a single person reading this newsletter who isn't experiencing similar challenges. There are a lot of reasons for it which we don't need to discuss here, but the reality is that the school system has been less aggressive than the County in dealing with rising costs, and thus has an underfunded healthcare system which the County is now literally bailing out to the tune of over \$7 million. Sheriff's deputies, firefighters and others have been paying more because the Board of Supervisors was forced to take corrective action; yet LCPS ignored warnings from its plan auditors and didn't take action. Fortunately, Dr. Williams quickly discovered this problem which was left for him by the previous administration, and this year's budget includes premium increases of 9% and deductibles (\$150 for individuals, \$300 for families) to the more expensive plans offered.

## **DULLES DISTRICT UPDATES**

### **Dulles South Bus Route**

Local bus service for the Dulles South Route 85 begins Monday, February 2. This is an important milestone for our community and something I fought for on the Board. Route 85 will provide connections to local activity centers within the County and connections to the Silver Line. This route is the beginning of the transit network that will be in existence when Silver Line rail begins operation in Loudoun County.

Keep in mind this is a different type of service than the long haul bus service to DC and express bus service to Metro. It is funded differently and uses contract equipment and providers. This new route is NOT the only new route that will serve Dulles South—we are still planning direct express bus service to Metro and additional capacity for long haul service. I envision the primary users to be the elderly and those who are unable to drive for various reasons. When StoneSprings Hospital opens next year, it will provide a vital link to the medical campus from across the County, and the same will be true for the expanded Multipurpose Center.

A link to the route and schedule can be found [here](#). Obviously, since there has never been service before, there will be some trial and error as we begin, and we'll have to give it some time to see what the ridership looks like.

### **Dulles Community Outreach Project**

The Dulles Community Outreach Project kicked off at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center on January 22. This project will help us to develop strategies to aid in future planning and programmatic activities. If you were unable to attend, there will be many more opportunities for you to participate and I encourage you to do so. We need your insight to direct our long-term growth and development here in the fastest growing area of the County. More information on the project can be found [here](#).

### **Dulles South Multipurpose Center Expansion Update**

Bids for Phase II and III of the Dulles South Multipurpose Center went out this week! The schedule for bids is aggressive and groundbreaking is still scheduled for spring of this year. Phase II and III will add an additional 80,000 square feet including a senior center, recreation and fitness areas, program facilities and an aquatics center.

You may recall my update from November 2014 that outlined some of the challenges with having HVAC inconsistencies for the separate phases. A redesign of the HVAC components of Phase II was needed to work with Phase III. I'm still hesitant to provide you with a construction timeline, but once a contractor is selected and work is underway, I will have a better update for you.

I know that I have expressed my frustration before that we've incurred these delays, but I'm thankful that the issues were discovered earlier on as opposed to when construction is underway. It could have led to bigger problems and the possibility of additional funding. The construction will necessitate relocating the South Riding Proprietary's annual events on the property. My understanding is that alternate locations have been secured and the events will proceed.

### **Brambleton District Park**

The contractor, Jeffery Stack, Inc., has completed grading and underground utilities activities. Weather permitting, curb and gutter and asphalt will begin and the restroom will be installed. Construction completion is planned for May of this year. The park will consist of nine athletic fields on approximately 26 acres east and 33 acres west of Belmont Ridge Road.

## **TRANSPORTATION UPDATES**

### **Mooreview Parkway Project Delayed by Gas Line**



This constructs the segment of Mooreview Parkway between Croson Lane and Old Ryan Road. The project was planned to be advertised for construction in September 2014, however coordination with Columbia Gas for a possible gas line relocation and pipeline upgrade is underway and has caused delays. Once these issues are resolved, its anticipated that bids will be solicited in this quarter and construction is anticipated to start in Spring 2015.

### **East Gate Park and Ride Lot and Metro Service**

Work on this 220-space lot is ongoing with the installation of curb and gutter, base course paving, grading of the athletic fields and some utility work. In the next three months, work will continue on the athletic field, restroom installation and parking lot lighting. Weather permitting, the lot should be complete by July 2015. That's the good news. The bad news is that the County Transit manager informed the Board that production delays are continuing for the buses that have been ordered to serve the lot. Apparently, there is a nationwide shortage for buses and manufacturers can't keep up with demand. This has also impacted the second-hand market. The bottom line is that the currently estimated delivery date for our next buses is Summer 2016. The Board expressed concern about this situation and I've asked the County Administrator to seek other options. Quite frankly, we're not going to have a lot of fund balance to work with which isn't going to help either. I anticipate having further updates on this during the budget worksessions in March.

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **Under Construction Map**

Our Loudoun Capital Improvement Plan online map is a great resource for active and planned projects and was updated at the beginning of the year. Click on any project and you can find out more information. You can find the map [here](#).

### **Snow Removal Information**

During a snow event of more than two inches, you can view the status of plowing at [www.VDOTplows.org](http://www.VDOTplows.org). If you feel your street may have been missed you can call 1-800-FOR-ROAD to report an unplowed road. As always, residents can reach out to my office during winter events if they feel there is a situation which warrants extra attention. I will also use my Facebook page to provide updates as needed.

### **Blood Pressure Screenings at Dulles South Multipurpose Center**

Inova Loudoun Hospital Mobile Health Services will be at the Dulles South Multipurpose Center on Tuesday, February 3, from 10:00am to noon conducting blood pressure screenings. For further information call the Mobile Health hotline at 703-858-8818 or visit [www.inova.org/mobilehealth](http://www.inova.org/mobilehealth).

### **Junior Woman's Club of Loudoun – Prom Wishes Dress Donation**

The Junior Woman's Club of Loudoun (JWCL) is hosting its 13th annual Prom Wishes event on Saturday, March 14. JWCL collects prom dresses and accessories and then makes them available to high school girls in the community at a one-day boutique where they can select prom attire free of charge. This year's event will be held March 14 from 10 a.m. – 3 p.m. in the Teen Center at Rust Library in Leesburg, Virginia and all teen girls are welcome.

To make the event successful, JWCL needs new or gently worn formal dresses, shoes, purses, jewelry, accessories, and unopened cosmetics. Tax deductible donations may be left at the following locations throughout Loudoun County until March 9th:

- Ashburn: Studio Pink Fit in Ashburn
- Leesburg: A.V. Symington Teen Center at Rust Library, Maggie's Closet, Claude Moore Community Center & Salon Ten
- Purcellville: Loudoun Valley Community Center
- South Riding: Dulles South Multipurpose Center & Town Hall
- Sterling: Sterling Community Center

For additional information, please visit their web site at [www.jwcl.org](http://www.jwcl.org) or email [promwishes@jwcl.org](mailto:promwishes@jwcl.org). JWCL is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Contributions to the organization are tax deductible.

### **Dulles South Food Pantry**

The Dulles South Food Pantry is a multi-faith emergency food pantry. They provide nutritious food, personal supplies and other services to those in need in Dulles South and the surrounding area that come to them regardless of income, faith or other criteria. They are an all-volunteer organization focused both on feeding the hungry and promoting the self-sufficiency of those they serve. Donations to the Dulles South Food Pantry are tax deductible. The Dulles South Food Pantry needs canned chicken & tuna; soups and stews with protein; 2 or 5 lbs. bags of rice or rice mixes; pasta; boxed potatoes; breakfast cereal and pancake mix; granola bars; fruit (in cans, plastic or dried); canned beans; pasta sauce (no glass please); seasoning packets; toothpaste; shampoo; and grocery store gift cards in any amount. They are now able to accept food donations at Dulles South Multipurpose Center located at 24950 Riding Center Drive in South Riding, Virginia during business hours. The Dulles South Food Pantry is open to distribute food the 1st, 3rd and 5th Wednesdays of the month from 5 pm to 8 pm located at 24757 Evergreen Mill Road, Dulles VA 20166. For additional information please visit their website at [www.dsfp.org](http://www.dsfp.org).